

Inmates Sentenced for Riot in Vaughn Correctional Center

Other defendants plea to drug, weapons, and robbery charges

A Superior Court judge sentenced three inmates Friday for their roles in the 2017 Vaughn prison riot, which resulted in the murder of correctional officer Lt. Steven Floyd.

- Dwayne Staats, 37, sentenced to two life sentences in prison plus 153 years for his conviction on 2 counts of Murder First Degree, Riot, 2 counts of Assault First Degree, 4 counts of Kidnapping First Degree, and Conspiracy Second Degree.
- Jarreau Ayers, 38, sentenced to 123 years for his conviction on Riot, 2 counts of Assault First Degree, and 4 counts of Kidnapping First Degree, and Conspiracy Second Degree.
- Royal Downs, 54, sentenced to 3 years for his guilty plea to Riot to be served at the conclusion on his life sentence in Maryland.

All three of the defendants were already serving terms of life in prison for previous Murder First Degree convictions.

Deputy Attorneys General John Downs, Brian Robertson, and Nichole Warner prosecuted the Vaughn trials with the support of paralegal Stacey Coupe, social workers Crystal Pitts and Donna Lindsey, investigator Willie Santiago, and administrative assistant Evelyn Davis. Sgt. David Weaver and a team Delaware State Police Homicide Unit investigators led an extensive investigation in the aftermath of the riot and were critical to securing this outcome. Attorney General Jennings released the following statement after the sentencing:

“We are grateful for the hard work that prosecutors, investigators and staff did to find those responsible for the riot and to present the strongest case that the State could

under tremendously difficult circumstances. Above all else we continue to think of the Floyd family, Patricia May, Winslow Smith, Joshua Wilkinson, and the staff of the Department of Correction, all of whom have suffered incredible grief and endured a long, arduous process over the last 31 months.”

An investigation by the New Castle County Police led to a guilty plea on drug and weapons charges. In December 2018, after observing Jerome Mond, 21, of Claymont, make a drug sale in the Knollwood community, police obtained a warrant and searched Mond’s home. Officers found 56 bags containing a total of 1.768 grams of fentanyl, along with 12 small bottles containing a total of 316.4 grams of PCP. Officers also recovered 2 loaded .45-caliber handguns. Mond pleaded guilty to Drug Dealing and Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony. A Superior Court judge will sentence Mond in January. Deputy Attorney General Beth Savitz prosecuted the case. Detective Nicholas Beinke of the New Castle County Police Department was the chief investigating officer.

A 41-year-old Dover man who slashed a clerk’s face while robbing a convenience store has pleaded guilty. Deputy Attorney General Marie Graham secured the plea from Kevin Wayman. In February 2019, after distracting the clerk in the 7-11 in the 400 block of South New Street in Dover by dropping a bottle and breaking it, Wayman grabbed 2 cartons of cigarettes and ran from the store. The victim confronted Wayman and during the struggle, Wayman slashed him with a knife. Wayman pleaded guilty to Robbery First Degree and Possession of a Deadly Weapon During the Commission of a Felony. A Superior Court judge immediately sentenced Wayman to 5 years in prison, followed by 6 months of either home confinement or work release, then 1 year of probation.